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DECEMBER MEETING.

A stated meeting was held on the 8th instant, at eleven o'clock, A.M. ; the President in the chair.

The records of the preceding meeting were read.

The Librarian read the list of donors for the past month.

The Rev. George Punchard was elected a Resident Member ; and Mr. John Foster Kirk, of Philadelphia, was elected a Corresponding Member.

A communication was received from the Committee of Arrangements of the Pilgrim Society at Plymouth, inviting the Historical Society to be present "by a delegate" on the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth ; to take place on Wednesday, the 21st instant.

Voted, That the Society accept the invitation ; and that, as our President is engaged as the orator of the occasion, and as our first Vice-President may be prevented from being present, Governor Washburn, the second Vice-President, be appointed the delegate.

Mr. Deane read the following letter from Abraham Eustis, "Major Light Artillery" (afterward Brigadier General), addressed to his uncle, the Hon. William Eustis, dated "Niagara Camp, 4 Mile Creek, May 11, 1813," giving an interesting account of the battle of "York," now Toronto. The letter was kindly furnished by Professor Henry L. Eustis, of Harvard College, a son of the writer : —

NIAGARA CAMP, 4 MILE CREEK, May 11th, 1813.

DEAR SIR, — Presuming you will hear a thousand idle and exaggerated reports of the affair of York, I shall endeavour to give you a correct statement of it. On the 23rd ult. the troops under the command of General Pike, being 2,000 effective men, with six pieces of artillery, embarked on board the fleet at Sackett's Harbour. On the 25th weighed anchor with a fair wind, and stood up the lake. On the 27th, at sunrise, we were off the York Light House : at about 7 o'clock

the fleet dropt anchor about two miles below the principal fort, and the signal was made for the troops to disembark. There were boats sufficient to land something upwards of 300 men at once. The order of debarkation was established by General Pike, as follows: Major Forsyth's Rifle Corps to land first, form a chain and cover the landing of the troops of the line; the sixteen platoons of the 1st Brigade under Colonel Pearce; three platoons, as a reserve for the 1st Brigade, under Major Swan; Major Eustis's train of Artillery; the 21st Infantry and McClure's Volunteers, as a second line of reserve, under Lieutenant-Colonel Ripley. As soon as the signal was made to debark, the boats were filled by the Riflemen and two platoons of the 15th Infantry, and pulled for the shore. The wind blew fresh out of the harbour; and our boats fell to leeward, a half a mile farther than where it was intended to land. Where they at last struck the shore, it was skirted by a thick wood, which was occupied by the Grenadiers of the 8th, or King's Regiment, a part of the Newfoundland Regiment, a body of militia, and about fifty Indians. They commenced firing as our boats approached the shore, with however but little effect. Our men landed under their fire, and with the greatest gallantry immediately ascended the bank, and struck into the wood, where a very sharp conflict took place, which lasted about three-quarters of an hour, when the enemy retreated, and took post behind a redoubt containing three eighteen-pounders. Too much credit cannot be given to Forsyth's Corps for their conduct in this affair. They displayed great coolness and undaunted bravery. During the engagement, two of the schooners hauled in near the shore, and threw grape-shot into the wood, which, though it had no other effect, served to alarm the militia and Indians, who soon took to their heels. In this action we lost Captain Hoppock and Lieutenant Bloomfield killed, and about ten privates; Captain Smith, Lieutenant Purlee, and about twenty non-commissioned and privates wounded. We could not exactly ascertain the loss of the enemy; but we buried fifty-seven of them on the field, including four commissioned officers.

Between ten and eleven o'clock our troops were all landed, our artillery mounted, and the column formed. Four or five of the schooners had, by this time, beat up to the fort and commenced a cannonade. The enemy returned a brisk but ill-directed fire from his several batteries, by which one midshipman and two or three seamen were killed, and the vessels uninjured. Our column, being now on the march to attack, had advanced within about eighty rods of the redoubt behind which the enemy was stationed, when a large chest of ammu-

nition in it exploded, dismounted two of the guns, and destroyed about fifty of their best men. The enemy immediately abandoned it, and retreated towards the fort. We pressed on after him, until we approached near the second battery, which was likewise abandoned. This was a two-gun battery, on a small rising ground about fifty rods from the fort. I here proposed to General Pike to allow me to bring the two twelve-pounders to the front, reverse the battery, and fire under cover of it into the fort and block-house, which we supposed still occupied by the enemy. He accordingly halted the column. The twelve-pounders and one six-pounder were brought forward, commenced firing, and had discharged about three rounds, when an explosion took place, which I will not attempt to describe. It was more horrible, more awful, and, at the same time, more sublime, than my pen can pourtray. At first the air was darkened with stones, rafters, and clay. In about half a minute the infernal shower descended and dealt destruction to our column. Hardly a man escaped without a bruise; 250 were either killed, or seriously wounded; among them our leader, the gallant Pike. In about two minutes we recovered from the shock sufficiently to look about us. The column had recoiled on itself about twenty yards, and the ground at the head of it was covered with the dead and dying. The fort before us was in ruins, the enemy was discovered in full retreat nearly a mile beyond it; and we at once understood that he had fired a train to the magazine, which was the cause of the explosion. It was directly determined to conceal for the present the fall of the General, the platoons were rallied, and Colonel Pearce, the senior officer, was urged to lead us instantly forwards. In five minutes we were again on the line of march, and passed over the ruins of the fort, by the stockade fort and barracks to the entrances of the village, where unfortunately Colonel Pearce ordered a halt. A flag passed between him and a Colonel Chewet of the York Militia. Something like a capitulation was entered into. More than an hour was consumed in drawing up the articles; and in the mean time General Sheaffe, with his staff, and about 100 regulars, made his escape.

Thus terminated the capture of York, which appears to have been the grand depot of Upper Canada. The quantity of stores of every description found there was immense, being ten times more than we could carry away. The loss of the enemy is doubtless very severe. The gain to us is, in my opinion, far overbalanced by the loss of Pike, and the brave men who fell with him. Had he lived, it would have been indeed a victory; for I am sure we should have secured Sheaffe, and every one who was under arms with him. General Dearborn

assumed the command the day after Pike's death, and remained on shore some days. The fleet brought the troops over here on the 8th instant, and sailed on the 10th for Sackett's Harbour, to bring up reinforcements. On their return, it is understood, we are to attack the stronghold of Fort George, where I think we shall have hard fighting, though I do not doubt of success.

There is yet no probability of the Light Artillery being mounted, and as I am now with Colonel Porter I am without command.

With my best respects for Mrs. Eustis,

I am, Sir, your very obed't,

ABR'M EUSTIS,

Major Lt. Artily.

Hon. WM. EUSTIS.

Indorsed,—

A. EUSTIS,

May, 1813.

The Corresponding and Recording Secretaries, the Treasurer and the Librarian, were appointed a committee to consider whether any alterations in the By-Laws are desirable, and to report at the next meeting.

Mr. Ellis Ames produced for exhibition a manuscript copy of the statutes or laws of the Plymouth Colony, in one hundred and sixty-four long and closely written pages, certified by, and in the handwriting of, Nathaniel Morton, who was Secretary of the Plymouth Colony from some time in the year 1645 until his death, June 28, 1685.

The manuscript was entire and contained the address to the inhabitants of New Plymouth, the revision of the laws of 1658, with all the supplements, down through the year 1666. It was a copy of the Plymouth statutes then extant, and before any of them had been printed. Mr. Ames stated that he had owned this copy twenty years or more; that he was satisfied, after much inquiry, that it was the only one now in existence of a number of copies then made to be sent to the several towns in the colony; that he had no doubt it was the copy sent by Secretary Morton in 1667, by order of the Plymouth government, to the town of Bridgewater. Mr. Ames said that about twenty years ago he overhauled the manu-

scripts, papers, and documents in a very large old chest in the garret of the mansion of the late Hon. Daniel Howard, of West Bridgewater, who died in August, 1833, aged eighty-four years, and found this manuscript; that Mr. Howard was representative in the General Court of the old town of Bridgewater for the political year 1786-7; a senator of Plymouth County for the political years 1788-9 to 1793-4 inclusive; a member of the Massachusetts Convention for the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, and of the Convention for the Amendment of the Constitution of Massachusetts in 1820; a judge of the Court of Common Pleas; and again representative of Bridgewater for the political years 1813-14 to 1819-20 inclusive. He was profoundly versed in the history of the country, especially of the Plymouth Colony, and a great local antiquary; and was born and brought up in the ancient dwelling-house built by his great grandfather, John Howard, taken down about the year 1825, in which the selectmen of the ancient town of Bridgewater held their meetings from the time of King Philip's war until in the year 1817, when he himself saw them assemble and meet there; and that without doubt Judge Howard found that manuscript in the garret of that old house, and removed it, many years ago, to his own house as a rare curiosity.

The President read a letter from the venerable Frederick Lahrbush, now in the one hundred and fifth year of his age, dated at "New York, 5th December, 1870." In a memorandum appended to the letter, he states that he was "born in London, England, on March 9th, 1766; employed in Civil Service on the Continent; returned to England, 1808, and following year received ensign's commission; embarked for Portugal, 1818; retired from service as a Captain."

Mr. Ellis Ames presented a copy of a book entitled "Report to the Rt. Honorable the Master of the Rolls upon the Documents in the Archives and Public Libraries of Venice. By Thomas Duffus Hardy, Deputy Keeper of the Public Records. London, 1866."

The President, referring to Mr. Waterston's recent return from his tour to California, and his presence at this meeting, expressed the hope that the Society might hear from him in reference to his journey.

Mr. Waterston responded, and gave briefly some interesting reminiscences of his trip to "the far West."

Professor Washburn spoke of having seen, while in London, at Her Majesty's Public Record Office, the original Domesday Book; and he exhibited to the meeting a portion of it as printed in *fac-simile*.

The President read a letter, addressed to himself, from Mr. George H. Chapman, of Saybrook, Conn., dated Nov. 19, enclosing an account of the Fenwick family, and saying that, "by reason of our Valley Railroad running near the grave of Lady Fenwick, whom your ancestor, no doubt, helped to bury, our old town appointed a committee to remove the remains. We attended to that duty yesterday, and were eminently successful in finding the bones entire, after a lapse of two hundred and twenty-two years. A large volume of braided hair was found about the scull, so little decayed that the color was easily detected, being a light auburn. The teeth were sound; and, from the length of the jaw, I should think she was a woman above the medium size. The remains will be reinterred in our ancient cemetery, from the Congregational Church. . . . You are invited to be present."

Mr. Chapman's letter enclosed another to himself, from Mr. R. D. Smith, of Guilford, giving a sketch of Lady Alice Fenwick (who was the wife of George Fenwick) and of her family; and also a slip from the New York "Evening Post," of 22d November, of a like import.*

* A few days after the meeting at which this communication was made, the Society was presented with a small pamphlet, by the Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, of Hartford, entitled "Reinterment of the remains of Lady Alice Apsley Boteler, wife of George Fenwick, Esq. Nov. 23, 1870. (Reported for the Hartford 'Daily Courant,' Nov. 24.)" —Eds.